



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ARMY
CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS
CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE AIR FORCE

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

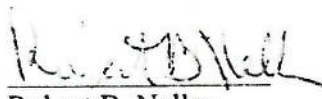
SUBJECT: Senior Leader Accountability within the U.S. Military


As we have discussed with you in the past, we are increasingly concerned about our ability as Chiefs to grow and promote our best service members to senior leadership positions. All of us view maintaining trust and confidence - with the American people and within our force - as the essential element of our past and future mission success. We perceive that external trust in us to hold our senior leaders accountable in cases where there are questions about their behavior is strained. At the same time, we have concerns about the capability of our internal processes to respond promptly and equitably when there are accusations of misconduct.

There are a number of factors that we believe complicate our efforts in this area, some of which are within our own organizations. One of the most challenging of these is the time it takes to complete any inquiry into general or flag officer conduct. The issues involve a range of considerations, both within and outside of the Defense Department, that deserve careful review.

To that end, we plan to ask a prominent external organization to convene a group of diverse experts to conduct a study on this issue. The panel will assess whether there are steps that can be taken to enhance both external and internal trust in the process of holding our leaders accountable. We view this effort as complementary to your initiatives to enhance ethics and professionalism, and we look forward to your support.


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